

CONNEXION

steering telecom ahead

July 2013

MOBILE PHONE CHANGING *Lifestyle*





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Mobile telecom sector is the change maker of the country and in this issue of Connexion, we are trying to portray how mobile technology is changing the lifestyles of millions around the globe as well as in Bangladesh--- in the way we think, react and work.

The national budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year has been passed in the parliament, slapping a 5 percent increase in corporate tax for publicly traded mobile network operators. The MNOs earlier urged the government to scrap the proposal for increasing corporate tax as this would impact negatively in the development of the capital market in Bangladesh but unfortunately, the government did not pay heed to the one of the main contributors to the national economy in terms of government revenue and tax.

Mobile telecom is one of the most vibrantly growing sectors of the country, which has witnessed a 10 percent growth per annum, reaching mobile penetration to 66.36 percent. The number of mobile subscribers crossed 100 million landmark, reaching the figure of 103 million in May 2013. The subscriber base was 90 million in April 2012 where the mobile penetration was 61.83 percent.

The national budget for the fiscal year 2013-2014 has been passed in the Parliament though there was no significant incentive for the mobile telecom sector. However, MNOs have commended at the reduction of Supplementary Duty on the import of SIM cards. The duty has been cut to 20 percent from 30 percent. Although, there remains many issues relating to MNOs tax and VAT still unresolved despite repetitive prayers from the industry which has long been over burdened with tax.

Bangladesh is on the brink of the auction of 2.1 GHz spectrum for Third Generation (3G) technology, but we believe licensing regimes should support long term investment from operators. Stringent non-price conditions reduce spectrum value, undermine future returns on investment and threaten business continuity.

Nonetheless, in any auction, reserve price should reflect the lower end of the expected spectrum value to maximize bidder's interest. MNOs expect that the authorities concerned would undertake measures for resolution of outstanding 2G relicensing issue before conducting a new auction. Non-spectrum regulation should be excluded from the licensing framework and adoption of a service and technology neutrality licensing model and clarity on the recovery of VAT on spectrum should be enforced.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN special body on telecommunication, at a recent GSMA workshop, has recommended that spectrum between 760 MHz and 840 MHz needs to be allocated to wireless broadband. Bangladesh has considerable spectrum potentially available below 3GHz. Allocating sufficient spectrum to mobile will help bridge the digital divide between Bangladesh and its Asian neighbors.

Mobile broadband penetration in Bangladesh currently stands at 0.69 percent and is estimated to reach 1.5 percent by 2016. Although behind other countries in the Asia Pacific region with respect to broadband penetration, with the appropriate telecommunications regulatory framework and policies, Bangladesh has the opportunity to transform its current position and to be benefitted dramatically from the rollout of mobile broadband across the country.

The holy month of Ramadan has started and on behalf of all the MNOs, I wish that the true spirit of Ramadan rings in every heart.

T I M Nurul Kabir

ABOUT AMTOB

Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB) is a national trade body representing all mobile telecom operators in Bangladesh. AMTOB has emerged as the official voice of the Bangladesh mobile industry to interact with relevant government agencies, regulators, financial institutions, civil society, technical bodies, media and other national & international organizations. It provides a forum to discuss and exchange ideas between the stakeholders and the industry actors for the development of mobile telecom industry through public private dialogue. AMTOB facilitates an environment which is conducive for its members and industry stakeholders with a view to establish a world class cellular infrastructure for delivering benefits of affordable mobile telephony services to the people of Bangladesh to bridge the digital divide.

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DID YOU KNOW?

One million threads of fiber optic cable can fit in a tube of **0.5 inch** in diameter.



Telephone is the most used piece of communication equipment in the world.

Telephone wires were ranked according to how tasty they were to **mice and rats**



"Ahoy" (As used in ships by the sailors) was the original telephone greeting that Alexander Graham Bell suggested. But later it was superseded by Thomas Alva Edison, who suggested **'Hello'** instead.

The very first phone call was "Watson come here, I want you!" It was made on March 10, 1876 in Boston, Massachusetts, between **Alexander Graham Bell** and his assistant **Thomas A. Watson**.



As a tribute to **Alexander Graham Bell** when he died in August 02, 1922, all the telephones stopped ringing for one entire minute.

A Google Study revealed that around **60 million** women in India are now online and are using the Internet to manage their day-to-day life. However, no such statistics exists for Bangladesh.

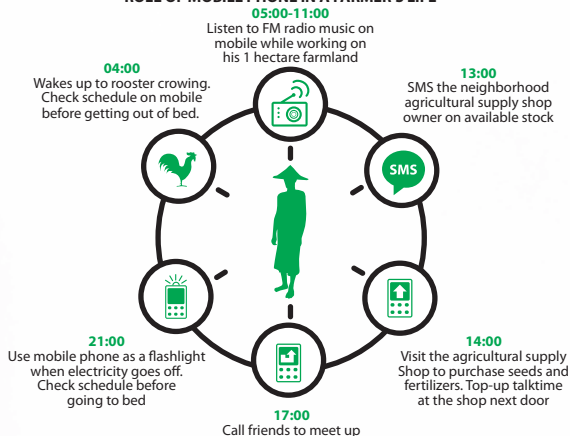


Mobile Changing Lifestyle

Mobile telecommunication is yet another example of how a technology can change the lifestyle of human society. It is rapidly changing lifestyles and the commercial landscape around the globe as well as in Bangladesh.

The Mobile phone is changing our lives in all aspects - the way we think, react and work. Mobile phones have gradually become an integral part of our lives. It is no wonder that mobile technology has coherently changed the style in which we live and work.

ROLE OF MOBILE PHONE IN A FARMER'S LIFE



Now, commoners can use a mobile which was beyond the imagination of a person just a decade ago. What was a symbol of aristocracy for the rich, has now become a daily necessity for people from all walks of lives.

It has inspired thousands of small entrepreneurs to open retail recharge shops where they not only top up airtime but also sell mobile accessories. Many unemployed youth, foreseeing the opportunities, trained themselves to repair mobile handsets and found a new livelihood.

Mobile Telecom Sector: Creating Opportunities

In Bangladesh, mobile telecom sector which has over 100 million active subscribers created 1.5 million direct/indirect employments, and moreover, the scenario in Asia Pacific is far better. The mobile ecosystem is also expected to contribute approximately 16 million jobs across the region. This includes 6.4 million jobs directly attributable to the mobile ecosystem and an additional 9.7 million jobs across points of sale, distributors etc.

Even consumer electronic sellers sensing huge addressable market, launched Bangladeshi branded

mobile handsets among which Symphony, Walton and Smart are the most successful ones competing with global brands like Nokia, Sony and Samsung. Bangladeshi manufacturers are also producing mobile accessories like chargers, batteries etc.

Nonetheless, the mobile telecom sector has emerged as one of the highest tax payers and source of government revenue. It is the single largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country. Till date, mobile industry has invested more than BDT 50,000 crore in Bangladesh and approximately 10 percent of the total national revenue solely comes from the telecom operators.

Mobile in Education

Mobile telecommunications are even influencing educational curriculum of different universities. At present, various universities have started to offer courses particularly on telecommunications considering the job market demand of the sector.

Public examination results are being published via SMS and even the students can register into universities via sending an SMS now.

Mobile in Health Services

Today, although Bangladeshi people can get access to health service just by dialing a short code and seek for their health problem remedy, but mHealth solutions can still play an important role as the rate of maternal deaths remains to be worryingly high. The country is severely limited by a shortage of individuals equipped with midwifery skills. Compared to the global average — where skilled workers attend 60 percent of births — the rate in Bangladesh is just 30 percent.

This, combined with lack of access to health information for mothers, cost Bangladesh 240 deaths per 100,000 births compared to the global average of 210.

In view of this, Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action, founded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Johnson and Johnson — delivers information to health workers via mobile devices, while pregnant mothers can receive SMS or voice messages with prenatal advice appropriate for their gestation stage.

APONJON MOBILE-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

2 MILLION
TARGET USERS
OF APONJON BY 2015

50,000
MOTHERS REACHED
BY APONJON

Informational mobile campaigns

- Pregnant mother receive SMS or voice messages with prenatal advice appropriate to their gestation stage e.g. Aponjon program by MAMA in Bangladesh

Education and referral can reduce perinatal and maternal mortality by 30 percent

- Mobile- assisted education of traditional birth attendants reduced perinatal mortality by 30 percentage

- Maternal mortality found to be reduced by 26 percent in regional trials in Pakistan and 50 percent in Uganda

Maternal mortality in Bangladesh can be reduced to 168 per 100,000 live births from current 240

Mobile in Money Transaction

Mobile money transactions have enabled hundreds of thousands of people to send money to their near and dear ones just with a press of a button, making life easier than ever before.

In Bangladesh, almost half of the population is financially excluded, with 40 percent of citizens unbanked, with no access to products such as savings accounts. Helping redress this situation is a Mobile Financial Service (MFS) solution, giving 3 million Bangladeshis an affordable and accessible alternative to a regular bank account, according to a report of the Boston Consulting Group.

Corporate partners have played a critical part in rolling out the services, with key banks' initiatives — including the bKash venture of BRAC Bank and mobile bank account of Dutch Bangla Bank Ltd — coming together in 2011 to develop an mBanking offering.

MOBILE LEAD BRANCHLESS BANKING IN BANGLADESH

3 MILLION
MOBILE BANKING USERS
USD 4.5M
DAILY TRANSACTION VALUE
70,000
CUSTOMER POINTS

A COUNT FEATURES AND SERVICES INCLUDE

- Micro-savings:
USD 0-1 to register
(deposit, withdrawal,
balance enquiry)
- Remittance
- Mobile money
(P2P transfers)
- Salary disbursement
- Bill payment

Many local online sites accept mobile top up vouchers as a means for transaction against their product and commodities. People can buy train tickets, deposit some government fees via online, etc.

Mobile in Entertainment

Mobile telecom has changed the social media landscape. More people have been accessing social media sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc. via mobile phones than from their desktop.

Cell phones are now like mini computers and with gaming platforms, high resolution still pictures and video cameras, mailing systems, text messengers, carriers of entertainment and business information, helping within one's commercial and business transactions.

Mobile in Agriculture

Fishermen and farmers have been able to sell their products in markets where the demand is high. This is an illustrious example of how mobile phones can promote economic growth. This resulted in lesser wastage of fish and other perishable goods, synergized business operations, and increased accessibility to information, all of which together leads to greater efficiency and enhanced economic growth.

In Bangladesh, as many as 2 million purchase orders have been sent to farmers over SMS for sugarcane purchase which is commonly known as "Purjee".

Mobile in Economy

It has become a common feature for all to pay utility bills via mobile phones avoiding the hassle of standing in long queues for hours.

Roller and Waverman, Meshi and Fuss — in their studies on telecoms, opined that telecom infrastructure can lead to economic growth through many different ways.

Firstly, according to them, investing in the telecom sector itself leads to growth. Secondly, increased demand in telecom related goods and services e.g. producing cables, machines, extra workloads etc. contributes to growth. More importantly, as telephone technology improves, people communicate more regularly over longer distances.

There is no doubt that Bangladesh has made significant progress in the growth of mobile telephony which has a catalytic effect and emerged as a change maker but still, there is a long way to go.

The blessing of telecommunication has not only kissed the urban livelihood but rural as well. Through the combination of reduced commuting time, better connectivity, availing banking for the unbanked and improved access to market information, the sector has enabled to upscale the economic condition of the nation as a whole.

There is potential to unleash much greater socio-economic impact via mobile technology in the coming years. This would entail a significant step up in GDP contribution from the mobile ecosystem as mobile penetration grows in a rapid pace. But for this, a predictable regulatory and favorable tax regime is required. MNOs have long been stressing for introducing a simpler, non-discriminatory license and regulatory regime with commercial freedom for all the operators to serve the customers. Introduction of technology-neutrality, service neutral licensing model and removing license conditions which prevent or inhibit this globally-accepted best practice approach is also a must for a sustainable growth of the sector.





Vivek Sood
Chief Executive Officer
Grameenphone Limited



We will continue our drive for customer satisfaction and at the same time, we want to be the partner of progress in this country through our contribution to the economy, society and environment.

Vivek Sood, Chief Executive Officer, Grameenphone Limited, shares his views on mobile telecom sector in Bangladesh with "ConneXion".

What is the contribution of mobile ecosystem in sustainable development of Bangladesh?

The contribution of mobile ecosystem is profound in the sustainable development of Bangladesh. The mobile industry is making huge contribution to everything from Gross Domestic Products (GDP), job creation, tax revenues to community development. Mobile phone operators have played a key role in connecting the nation. We have now more than 100 million mobile phone subscribers reaching out to almost 99 percent of the population area and 90 percent of geographic area. This has a huge impact for a country like Bangladesh, an emerging economy with immense possibilities. The mobile operators are in the forefront of bringing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Bangladesh. The industry has invested more than BDT 50,000 crore since the introduction of mobile phones in Bangladesh. The industry is also the highest tax payer to the government. Till 2011, the operators have paid more than BDT 40,000 crore as direct and indirect tax to the government. The contribution of the sector is not restricted to the economy alone; mobile technology plays a key role in improving

quality of life through improved access to key services such as healthcare and education. Currently, a farmer can easily get information on agriculture through mobile phone; a patient in a remote village can easily consult with a doctor through telemedicine services.

How do you assess Bangladesh's telecom market and its future?

The telecom market in Bangladesh has seen tremendous growth in the last few years due to intense competition among the operators. Lots of

3G technology, if guided by proper policies and regulations, will bring revolutionary changes in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh. Apart from faster internet, 3G will create opportunities for M-commerce, health, education and agriculture sectors.

new and innovative solutions and Value Added Services were launched in the past years. Internet usage through mobile phone is on the rise constituting almost 90 percent of the total internet users in the country. The

market is still voice centric though the data market is gradually expanding. We feel the data market will grow in future once the 3G services are introduced in the country. 3G technology, if guided by proper policies and regulations, will bring revolutionary changes in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh. Apart from faster internet, 3G will create opportunities for M-commerce, health, education and agriculture sectors. However, the future of the telecom sector depends on many issues from consistent regulatory environment to pricing of spectrum. Though the subscriber growth is slow now, there is still room for growth as many people, particularly at the bottom of the pyramid, are still left out of the mobile phone service arena.

Do you think that a Telecom Road Map/long-term perspective plan is required as support for achieving the 'Digital Bangladesh'?

Obviously, there should be a telecom Road Map with long term perspective. Unfortunately, there is no Road Map at present. A clear Road Map will boost the investors' confidence and willingness to invest further towards the development of the sector. A transparent and stable regulatory environment should be created through discussion with stakeholders to implement a 'Digital Bangladesh'. Operators are aligned with the government's vision to implement the 'Digital Bangladesh' at the stipulated time. In fact, major progress has already been made in this regard. For instance, Grameenphone as a corporate citizen has tied up with the utility service providers WASA and DESA allowing the subscribers to pay their utility bill through mobile phones. However, there are still miles to go. And for this, a consistent regulatory Road Map comprising all aspects such as spectrum policy and pricing, licenses, taxation etc must be addressed for smooth implementation of 'Digital Bangladesh'.

What are the key opportunities and challenges in the Mobile Telecom Industry?

Though the growth of the telecom sector will slow down in the coming years, there are still a lot of opportunities ahead. The mobile technology will bring greater socio-economic impact through innovative business models. Data, Content and VAS market will further flourish when 3G services are launched in the country. M-commerce, mobile financial services, agriculture, healthcare and education services will also flourish using mobile platform.

In fact Grameenphone has tied up with different banks to launch mobile banking service for its customers. Grameenphone also launched

telemedicine services through which patients in remote areas are able to take consultation from doctors through video conferencing. Another project, 'Online Schooling' was recently undertaken in collaboration with JAAGO Foundation. Through this initiative, a teacher from a distant location is able to conduct classes using video conferencing technologies.

But challenges lie there. The mobile phone industry is highly taxed. Grameenphone is paying over 60 percent of its revenue to government exchequer, which is the highest in the world. There are also prevalent regulatory uncertainties. Many key issues such as VAT rebate on 2G license renewal are yet to be resolved. These uncertainties are creating discomfort among the operators. We need regulatory certainty and reasonable tax regime to create an investment friendly environment.

What is your vision for 2013 to 2015?

Our vision is clear and simple. We want to offer the best experience to our customers through the introduction of latest technologies and innovative Value Added Services. We will continue our drive for customer satisfaction and at the same time, we want to be the partner of progress in this country through our contribution to the economy, society and environment.



Vivek Sood, Chief Executive Officer of Grameenphone and Brigadier General Abu Syeed Md. Masud, Project Director-Hatirjheel Project, inaugurated the tree plantation at Hatirjheel Area organized by Grameenphone.

Telecom Roadmap– A Prerequisite for National Development

Formulation of an objective oriented National Telecom Roadmap with specifically defined goals will enable the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to strategize both short term and long term plans in order to propel further growth of the country's mobile telecom sector - speakers underscored at a workshop organized by GSM Association in Dhaka recently .

The Roadmap will ensure the maximum utilization of the resources and achievement of the economies of scale in the shortest possible time. Incorporation of the policies in consultation with the stakeholders will bar the sector from sudden shocks, impeding its progress. The CAPEX intensive industry will be cushioned from unforeseen risks permitting the foreign investors to forecast and plan for their business in the future, luring higher Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and leading to the prosperity of the sector and the nation as a whole.

The speakers pointed out those elements of a National Telecom Roadmap while addressing a workshop titled "Telecom Policy for National Development."

An industry friendly, flexible, time befitting, stable and transparent comprehensive telecom regulatory framework should be designed in alignment with the Roadmap to achieve the vision of 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021, they added.

The daylong program was inaugurated by the Posts and Telecommunications Minister Advocate Shahara Khatun, MP, as the chief guest.

Chris Perera, Senior Director, Spectrum Policy and Regulatory affairs, GSMA (Asia Pacific), explained through a presentation, the "Economic Impact of Mobile Broadband Penetration in a Developing Market like Bangladesh". Presently, the Mobile Broadband Penetration in Bangladesh is the lowest in Asia.

The study indicated that through the proper utilization of mobile broadband connections as compared over fixed lines broadband, Bangladesh can impact greater economic development. A 10 percent increase in broadband penetration can increase GDP growth by up to 2 percent.

Telecommunication, the pivotal tool for spreading the benefit of Information and Communication Technology, will expedite introduction of new technology and the

transformation of a voice driven market to a data driven one through the emergence of high speed mobile broadband.

Mobile Phones being the primary access medium of internet and data services, with the advent of 3G technology juxtaposed with the existing 33 million mobile internet users' base in Bangladesh can catalytically change the landscape of mobile broadband connection.

The CEOs of the mobile operators expressed their concerted willingness to participate in the 3G and reiterated for clarifications on the issues relating to VAT and Tax. They appealed to the government to safeguard the interest of the telecom sector.

Information Minister, Hasanul Huq Inu, advocated for the Prime Minister's intervention to resolve the conflicts in the telecom laws, rules and regulations.

Sunil Kanti Bose, Chairman of BTRC, informed that the commission would announce a Telecom Roadmap within 1-2 years' time.

Barrister Tanjib-ul-Alam, a Supreme Court lawyer, solicited the policy makers to enable the telecom sector to thrive first, prior to reaping the benefit from it.



Vivek Sood, CEO of Grameenphone, speaking at a panel discussion while Information Minister Hasanul Huq Inu, MP; Md. Nazrul Islam Khan, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology among others are seen on the dias.

The Secretary General of AMTOB T I M Nurul Kabir concluded the session with a vote of thanks and a reminder to the esteemed participants on the infusion of ICT and Telecommunication Policies for the emancipation of a "Digital Era" to realize the phenomenal vision of 'Digital Bangladesh'; transformation of an industrial society to a knowledge-based one.

The program also included two keynote presentations titled "International Best Practices on Telecom Policy Framework and Bangladesh Perspective" and "Legislative Review to Accelerate the Digital Transformation in Bangladesh" followed by panel discussions.

The function was attended among others by Information and Communication Technology Minister Mostafa Faruk Mohammad, MP; MD. Abubakar Siddique, Secretary MoPT; ICT Secretary Md. Nazrul Islam Khan; CEOs of different Mobile Network Operators, senior officials of the government and BTRC and analysts to discuss various issues including uncertainty, ambiguity and non-congenial atmosphere currently prevailing in the telecom sector of the country.



A True Ramadan Story

The CSR that is Close to Banglalink's Heart

The holy month of Ramadan gives people a chance to rebuild oneself spiritually. Banglalink, as a responsible corporate entity, initiates a number of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities during this holy month. Banglalink cares about the people who fast in the scorching weather and feel empathy with their condition.

The traffic jams are an all too familiar scenario within the major metros of Bangladesh, when thousands of people wait patiently in the heat to unite with their family members, to have Iftar together. During this month, traffic jams are inevitable; hence Banglalink conducts various activities during Ramadan to assist those who are stuck in traffic jams. As the time closes in for Iftar, Banglalink arranges to provide weary Rozadar with water and dates to break their fast.



Banglalink volunteers distributing Iftar items among bus passengers.

Banglalink runs this project for the entire month of Ramadan every year, in massive scale and prominence. It is a simple, affectionate and a humble way of putting a smile on peoples' faces. The company believes this to be the true spirit of Ramadan – and like previous years, Banglalink will again be distributing bottled water and dates during Iftar time, in most of the major traffic intersections of the major metros.

Free bottled water and dates before Iftar will also be available from Banglalink branded booths in identified heavy traffic locations of divisional cities and a few prominent cities during the first twenty days of Ramadan. There is a plan to initiate such booths in popular shopping hubs during the last ten days of Ramadan too. It is expected that approximately 84,000 people who are fasting and trapped in the heated traffic during Iftar time, will be provided with water and dates to break their fast. This CSR activity of distributing dates and bottled water to the pedestrian, passengers and people from all walks of life, who are heading home for Iftar - is the most popular and effective activity during the month of Ramadan.

Another CSR activity that is very close to the heart of Banglalink is - during this time the company provides Iftar and dinner to approximately 12,000 orphaned children of 128 orphanages, from 32 districts across the country. Iftar and dinner are prepared by experienced chefs at the orphanage premises. The orphaned children feel very happy to get this surprising and hearty feast from Banglalink. This initiative remains very close to the heart of the company.

Shihab Ahmad, Chief Commercial Officer, Banglalink mentioned, "Ramadan is for most of us, about being close to family and friends, loved and closed ones; we need to think about those amongst us who are less fortunate not to have these great gifts of family and friends. There is no better feeling than helping others by choosing activities that makes a difference in their lives."



Banglalink organized Iftar party for orphans.



MOBILE ASIA EXPO 2013 – Connecting the Future

T I M Nurul Kabir Secretary General, AMTOB

It was a privilege for me to participate in the "Mobile Asia Expo" conference program, themed "Connecting the Future" hosted in Shanghai, China. The two day long program, organized by GSM Association, offered a sea of knowledge and networking opportunities with the visionary leaders from all corners of the world.

Over 15,000 attendees from 81 markets including the senior industry professionals, software companies, device makers, equipment providers, internet companies and government delegates from all across the globe graced the program.

The trip to Shanghai educated me on the true experience of the power of mobile technologies and services through live demonstration of how mobile is making home smarter, motoring more intelligent, shopping easier and city living safer. The "Connected City" featured the current reality and the future vision of a 'Connected Life' through a real city street demonstration in the heart of Mobile Asia Expo envisioning the connected experience.

Due to the time pressed schedule, it was not possible for me to participate in all the events. However, I would like to share a brief overview of some of the events which complied with the current circumstances of our country and concerning matters considered of utmost importance.

Ms. Anne Bouverot, GSMA Director General, Rajeev Singh-Morales, President, Alcatel-Lucent Asia Pacific, Jon Fredrik Baksaas, President and CEO, Telenor Group; are only a few names out of the total of eighty five esteemed Panelists in the conference.

Public Policy Forum

The public policy forum engaged first class speakers from the Telecom Ministry and Information Technology from across the world. The high-voltage event created a common platform of meeting for the key stakeholders and experts from the ministries and regulatory bodies of Asia Pacific region. With Asia Pacific being the largest mobile market, the forum gave an in depth insight on how mobile players through 'Total Connectivity' and delivering service can improve lives and consequently promote economic growth. A total of three keynotes titled "Asia Pacific Using Innovation to make the Mobile a World Reality", "New Consumer Trends from the Development of Mobile Communications" and "The Role Regulators in Asia Pacific – Sharing Experience" were presented in the forum.

Mahmudur Rahman, Executive Vice President, CRL of Robi Axiata Limited was one of the panel discussants of the topic "Shaping the Connected Economy".

Mobile Economy Asia Pacific 2013

A resourceful book titled "The Mobile Economy Asia Pacific 2013" was inaugurated at this event. The book illustrates a comprehensive and in depth analysis of how mobile technology have expedited the socio-economic development through spanning its services over the areas of agriculture, health, education and financial services both in the developed and in the developing world. Through the inclusion of unbanked communities into financial services availability, health care through low cost information dissemination, increased market knowledge of the farmers, reduced cost education facility; all these coalesced together have played an integral part in the overall socio-economic development.

Connecting the Future

The event staged CEOs from some of the leading operators of the world to discuss challenges and opportunities confronting the industry. The distinguished spokesperson articulated that the mobile industry across the region should work together in partnership towards achieving a common goal for persistent growth and profitability of the sector. They reminded the industry to draw more focus on attaining the full benefit of a connected economy besides indulging into science fiction technologies.

Digital Switchover Masterclass

The Masterclass event elaborated on the guide for the transition of analogue to digital transmission. It presented a bird's eye view of the entire digital process switchover, followed by expert reviews on the funding of the switchover process, customer awareness campaign, spectrum management and coordination of frequency usage during the switchover.

Exhibition

A scintillating exhibition entertained attendees showcasing cutting edge technology, demonstrations of products, devices and apps for both mobile professionals and compassionate consumers. Accenture, Alcatel-Lucent Shanghai Bell Co. Ltd, AT&T, China Telecom, Cisco System, Facebook, GSMA, KT Corporation, Mozilla Online, NTT Docomo Inc. are only a few of the umpteen exhibitors who dazzled the exhibition.



AMTOB Secretary General T I M Nurul Kabir is seen with Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Vice Chairman Md. Giasuddin Ahmed and Taimur Rahman, Director, Regulatory Affairs of Grameenphone at Mobile Asia Expo.



Mahmudur Rahman, Executive Vice President of CRL of Robi Axiata Limited speaking at a panel discussion at Public Policy Forum of Mobile Asia Expo.



NUMBERS & ANALYSIS

In Developing World, **11.1 percent** of inhabitants use Fixed Telephone Lines, whereas in Developed World, the same is used by **41.6 percent** of the population.

Approximately **96 percent** of the world population use Mobile Cellular Telephones.

Worldwide revenue from telecommunication services reached over **1 trillion Euros** in 2011 and is expected to hit around **1,150 trillion Euros** in 2014.

Based on sales figures, several of the top 30 telecommunication companies in the world are based in the US: AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, Sprint Nextel and Time Warner Cable.

Asia Pacific Region Mobile Operators' Revenue Opportunity in 2020 is forecast to be **USD 447 Billion**, the highest in the world.



GSMA EVENT



Tenzin Dolma Norbhu, Regional Coordinator and Senior ICT Specialist from The World Bank presenting a keynote paper at a seminar "Telecom Policy for National Development" organized by GSMA recently.



Posts and Telecommunications Minister Advocate Shahara Khatun, MP, inaugurated the GSMA workshop titled "Telecom Policy for National Development" as the chief guest.



MD. Abubakar Siddique, Secretary, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications speaking at a panel discussion at a GSMA seminar titled "Telecom Policy for National Development" held recently.



A view from the workgroup discussion which was formed to formulate action plan based on keynote presentations and panel discussions on the seminar titled "Telecom Policy for National Development" organized by GSMA recently.

AMTOB MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES



Airtel Bangladesh was the title sponsor of 'Dhaka Foodies' initiative of finding the ultimate Dhaka foodie of Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) which took place in IUB premise from June 18 to June 19, 2013. The program created a huge buzz among youth.



The closing ceremony of Social Business Forum 2013 was graced by Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. Mr. Shihab Ahmed, CCO of Banglalink was present as the special guest. Also present from North South University were Dr. Amin U Sarker, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Dean, School of Business and the Board of Trustees.



Citycell recently sponsored Bangladesh National Basketball Team (Under 16- Boys). This team participated in the qualifying round of South Asia Zone which was held in Dhaka. Md. Mahfuzur Rahman, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer of Citycell handed over the jerseys and track suits to the team at a ceremony held on June 24, 2013 at Citycell Head Office, Mohakhali, Dhaka.



Grameenphone in association with Symphony Mobile launched 'Fun Store', a dedicated content store for its customers. Grameenphone CMO Allan Bonke was present in the launching ceremony.



Robi, in partnership with the Ministry of Information & Communication Technology (MoICT), organized an internet fair for schools. The countrywide fair was launched in June. The ICT Minister was present at the press conference of the launch announcement.



At the moment of signing an agreement between Tetaltalk Bangladesh Ltd. and Directorate of Primary Education regarding Web and SMS Based Online Service for DPE in the presence of Advocate Shahara Khatun, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Post and Telecommunication.

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